W.377

A SERMON

Concerning

Reformation of Manners,

Preach'd at

St. James's Church, *Westminster*, *Feb.* 13.

And afterwards at

St. *BRIDES*,

To one of the

RELIGIOUS SOCIETIES.

By SAMUEL WESLEY, M. A.

LONDON:

Printed for *Charles Harper*, at the *Flower-de-Luce* over against St. *Dunstans* Church in *Fleetstreet*. 1698.

Preached in 1698.

To the

SOCIETIES

FOR

Reformation of Manners,

And the

RELIGIOUS SOCIETIES

In the KINGDOMS of

England and *Ireland*,

THIS

SERMON

Is Dedicated by

Their hearty Well-wisher

And humble Servant

S. Wesley.

To the

SOCIETIES

of

Freemasons

in England, Ireland,

and

SCOTLAND,

This Book

Is Dedicated by

Their most Willing

And most Humble Servant

The Author.

PSALM XCIV. v. 16.

Who will rise up for me against the Evil-doers, or who will stand up for me against the Workers of Iniquity?

Or as 'tis in the Old Translation,

Who will rise up with me against the Wicked, and who will take my part against the Evil-doers?

IF these Words had not been spoken by God himself, or, which is the same thing, by the Psalmist in his Name and by his immediate *Inspiration*, 'tis certain that any who should now have asked the same Question, must at least have expected the Censure of too much heat and forwardness, or the yet more severe one, of designing a Factious Combination instead of a Religious Union. The

Occasion of them, as well as of the whole Psalm, is judg'd to have been the Affliction of Gods People in *Babylon*, where they had no Friend or Helper; in which Condition they address themselves in the pathetic words of this Psalm, to him who *never fails those who trust in him*: expressing their firm Faith and dependance on the Almighty, and, that notwithstanding all they had endur'd, *The Lord would not cut off his People, nor forsake his Inheritance*, but that at the last *Judgment should return unto Righteousness*. The time should come under the Reign of the Messiah principally and ultimately, tho immediately and imperfectly under *Zerubbabel*'s and *Joshua*'s Administration of Affairs, when there should be a more equal distribution of things, and all good Men should with one mind and one mouth glorifie God, and adore his wonderful Providence and Goodness.

And then it follows in the words of the Text, *Who will rise up for* (or with) *me against the Evil-doers; who will stand up for me* (or take my part) *against the workers of Iniquity?* Who is there that has Courage or Zeal sufficient for such an Under-

Undertaking, and to assist the Civil and Ecclesiastical Governours to accomplish these happy Alterations; to reform Abuses, punish the Wicked, depress the Proud and raise the Humble: Which great Work the Psalmist [v. 17.] ascribes primarily and immediately to God, tho not excluding Man's free Agency and Co-operation, yet not depending upon them nor expecting much from them—*Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had well nigh dwelt in silence.*

But I shall not, in my Discourse from these words, insist any further on the occasion of them, or their connexion with the preceeding or subsequent Verses; but consider them as independant on the rest of the Psalm, and desire you to take notice, that the—*Rising up* for or *with* the Psalmist, here mentioned against Bad men, implies Zeal and Courage, which he was then so solicitously enquiring after,—as the *standing* up *for him*, or as 'tis in the *Syriac*, *sitting* and *preparing* a Man's self for such an Enterprise, may denote that *caution* and *prudence* which was necessary on so emergent an Occasion; as both of these Expressions imply an Union of good

Men with the firmest Resolves and steadiest Endeavours, against the workers of Iniquity.

From the Words we may deduce these Two Propositions.

I. That it is very difficult to perswade Men to engage in the Cause of God, against Wicked Persons and Evil-doers. This is fairly imply'd in the Words of the Question—*Who will rise up with me? Who will stand up for me?* What need of such a careful and exact Enquiry, if the Answer had been obvious and easie?

II. That 'tis the indispensible Duty of Good Men, with united Councils, and with the utmost Zeal and Prudence, to oppose Vice and Wickedness.

The former of which Propositions I shall insist on more briefly; the second more at large in the Body of my Discourse, and then apply the whole.

First then, We may learn from these Words, that it is very difficult to perswade Men to engage in the Cause of God, against wicked Persons and Evil-doers. The matter of fact is too plain and obvious, since neither Mens Obligations to God, nor those to their Country,

try, nor the Dictates of their own Consciences, nor the Persuasions and Examples of better Men, nay, not even their own solemn Oaths, can oftentimes prevail upon them to the Performance of this hazardous Duty. Nor are the *Reasons* less evident than the matter of *Fact* is. The Singularity of such an Attempt, the Disuse of the Laws, the Opposition of the Guilty, the Coldness of those who might and ought to encourage such as act in this manner; the Disobliging Mens Friends or Neighbours, the Fear of injuring their own Temporal Interest, but above all, the backwardness of those who are in Publick Offices, and that general Dis-regard which most Men seem to have of their own and others Souls; together with the want of a true Love to God and concern for his Glory, are but too plainly at the bottom of such an unexcusable Negligence.

I shall not therefore need to insist any further on this Proposition, but proceed to the

II. That 'tis the indispensible Duty of Good Men, with united Councils, and with the utmost Zeal and Prudence to oppose Vice and Wickedness. B 3 Which

Which Point may be divided into three Parts.

1. That Good Men ought to oppose Vice and Wickedness?

2. That they should do this with united Councils and Endeavours. And

That 3. With the utmost Zeal and Prudence that a Matter of so high an Importance needs and deserves.

In speaking to the first of these Heads; I shall first enquire into the strong Obligations Men are under to the performance of this Duty; and then prove, that 'tis their true Interest to answer those Obligations.

And one would think there should be but little need to insist on the *former* of these Heads, to any who remember their Baptism; for by their Renouncing the World, the Flesh and the Devil, they have actually entred into a War against them; they have listed themselves under the *Banner* of the *Cross*, and have taken a virtual Oath to be Christs faithful Servants and Soldiers to their Lives end. Now we cannot make this War Defensive only without great Disadvantage, nor will it be policy to expect it at home, but

but rather to carry it into the Enemy's Country, where we may expect, if not wholly to put an end to it, yet, at leaſt, more ſucceſsfully engage againſt it. Daring and open Wickedneſs is a plain Contradiction to the Almighty, and High-Treaſon againſt the Majeſty of Heaven; againſt him who is a great God, and a great King above all Gods: and are not all his Liege Subjects under the deepeſt Obligations to oppoſe it for that reaſon; to hate that which his *Soul hates*, and which *hates him*, and would if poſſible Dethrone him? Leſt otherwiſe they be dealt with as *Saul* was for ſparing the *Amalekites*, when he ought to have obey'd the Commandment of the Lord, and to have utterly deſtroy'd them.

But we have yet a further Relation to the Almighty, which obliges us to be valiant in his Cauſe and to fight his Battels. We are his *Servants* as well as his Children and his Subjects; he ſav'd us from our Enemies, he ſav'd us when Rebels, he reſcu'd us from the Devil, he ranſom'd us by the Blood of his Son; he has therefore by all imaginable Titles the Right of Dominion over us; we are not our

own, but are bought with a Price, and are therefore to glorifie God with our Bodies and Souls, which are his, and can by no means be accounted either grateful or faithful Servants, if we desert the Interest of our Master; if we refuse to engage in his Cause, or are patient while he is Dishonoured.

Now if these *Obligations* (and to which many others might be added) did really cross our true *Interest*, there might be some Pretence for our not pursuing them; but if, instead of that, it shall appear, that the Publick opposing of Vice does highly conduce to our Private, our Civil, our Temporal and Spiritual, and Eternal Happiness, what excuse can we make for our Negligence in this matter?

As for our Civil Happiness, we are all born Members of a Community, and consequently must desire the Good of the Whole, unless we can hate our selves, who are Parts of it. Now 'tis hard to say whether has done greater Mischief to the Publick, either Ill Principles, which have taken Men off from that Passionate Regard to their Country, which was so remarkable and so glorious among the antient

rient *Heathens*, or else a Bad Life and a Diſſolution of Manners, which from a complication of many unhappy Circumſtances, has of late ſo viſibly broken in upon us, both of which have ſo plain an Influence upon each other. Thus much is however certain, that whoever truely loves his Country, will heartily endeavour to make it *better*, which cannot be expected, conſidering the *Diſingenuity* of the *Bulk* of *Mankind*, without the due exerciſe of Diſcipline, and the Puniſhment of thoſe that do Evil.

But this is an *Article* which has been ſo often toucht and ſo much *exhauſted*, that I ſhall inſiſt no longer on it; only leaving it to the Conſideration of every prudent Perſon, whether there would be ſo much Baſeneſs, ſo much Falſhood, Treaſon, Bribery and Injuſtice; ſo much *Unrighteouſneſs and Strife* every where, were Perſons generally influenc'd with the Principles of Probity and Virtue; nay, had they not, on the contrary, abandoned themſelves to the Stream of *Vice* and *Lewdneſs*, which therefore 'tis the *concern* of every Good Man to oppoſe with all his Might; to prevent, if poſſible

ble, that threatning *Deluge* which is likely to break in upon us, and cover the *Face of our Land.*

Nor is the Oppoſition of Vice, in order to the *ſuppreſſing*, or at leaſt the *reſtraining* of it, leſs conducive to *domeſtick Happineſs* than 'tis to that of the *Publick*; it being evident, that the want of *Diſcipline* is the *Ruine* of *Families*, and that the *reſtoration* thereof would make better *Servants*, better Children, better Maſters, and render all *Relations* much more uſeful, and comfortable, and happy.

But Vice is further injurious to every Mans *perſonal* Happineſs; to his *Profit* as well as *Reputation*, to his *Body* as well as his *Mind*, by innumerable Inconveniences it brings upon him. Of how baſe a Spirit therefore he muſt be, who yields to that *Sin* which as it firſt brought *Death* into the World, ſo it continues daily to ſlay its Thouſands; brings the Judgments of God upon us, emaculates *Mankind*, taints and poiſons the very firſt *Threads* of Life, projects its Miſchief beyond the *preſent Age*, and loads *Poſterity* with a feeble and a miſerable *Offspring*?

Let

Let us next reflect on what passes in our *own Minds*, and the necessity there is, if we consult *their* Happiness, to oppose *Vice* in others as well as in our selves, because its *Contagion* is so very spreading and dangerous. Mistaken Men may call the Proud *happy*, and so of other Sinners, but 'tis impossible they should *be so*, and they know the contrary themselves: for what more severe *Tormentor* can a Man have in his own Breast, than any uncontroul'd Vice or sinful *Habit*. There are few Men who are altogether lost to the sense of *Virtue*, and to that natural *Taste* of *Goodness* at first imprinted on the Mind, and consequently *Vice* must needs be a *Torment* to the Mind as well as to the Body, since 'tis so contrary to our true *Nature*, and a Man must be as *uneasie* under it, as a wounded Person with an *Arrow* sticking fast in his Body. Its true, an ill Man makes as good a Show as he can, and thinks he bears it well out, but 'tis all Paint and *Vernish*; he has something within that denies him Ease; all his *Triumphs* are but like the miserable Ravings of one in a *Fever*, who perhaps looks as fresh as ever, and tells you he

feels

feels no *pain*, when 'tis but an unnatur
flushing, he's ſtill ſick at *Heart*, all with
in is *diſorder'd*, and he's not far from h
End.

Nor is the *eternal Intereſt* of every Ma
leſs concern'd in theſe matters than th
preſent *quiet* of his *Mind*: For unleſs w
oppoſe Wickedneſs, 'twill as certainly gai
ground upon us, and hurry us away
the *ſtream*, as the Sea will break in upo
a *Level*, if there be no Beach or Bank
to reſiſt it. We know that the Wages o
Sin is *Death*, both *temporal* and *eternal*
we know 'tis an *acceptable Service* to Go
to oppoſe and reſiſt it, that he himſel
has told us--'Thoſe who Honour him h
'will Honour; and that our bleſſed Sa
viour has aſſured us, 'That thoſe wh
'confeſs him before Men, he will alſ
'confeſs them before his Father which i
'in Heaven.

II. I proceed to the ſecond thing--Th
as good Men are oblig'd to oppoſe Vi
and Wickedneſs, ſo they are to do th
with *united Councils* and *Endeavours*. Wha
is a ſingle Perſons Duty in this matter
cannot *alter* its nature when it falls int
the Hands of Communities or *Bodies* o
Men

Men, but may be much more hopefully and *successfully* attempted by them; for the *Offenders* may sometimes be such *Sons of Zerviah*, that they'll prove too hard for any single Person: Their *Numbers* may be so great, that there will need one somewhat *proportionable* to oppose them, since *Miracles* are generally ceas'd, and tho *Sampson* and others of old could slay their *Heaps* upon *Heaps*, yet 'tis not now for single Persons to attack whole Armies; nor will a *greater Number* of undisciplined Men, who fight *loose* and straggling, gain equal Advantages on the Enemy, with a much *smaller Body* who engage with *Discipline* and *Order*. Its true, that the *Kingdom of Darkness* is likewise the Kingdom of *Confusion*; but still Satan will not *fight against Satan*, and all his Subjects *unite* themselves against the *Lord and against his Christ*, to *break their bonds in sunder, and cast away their cords from them*. Now in opposition to those *infernal Legions*, did our blessed Lord institute his **Church**; being a regulated *Society* of Men, by their very Nature and Constitution most firmly *united* together, and obliged to love one another; by virtue of which

which *mystical* and indissolvable *Union*, a
well with Christ their *Head*, as with a
their *Fellow-Members*, sealed and confirm
ed in the Holy *Sacraments*, they obtai
that *Strength* and *Stability* that the *Gat*
of Hell shall never prevail against them.

And indeed were all the *outward* Mem
bers of the visible Church, but real Mem
bers likewise of that which is internal
spiritual and invisible; in short, did al
who bear the name of Christ walk wor
thy of their Holy Profession, there woul
be no need of *Discipline*, nor of any such
subordinate Unions as I am now recom
mending, in any Christian Common-
wealth: any more than there would be
need of *Laws* and *Sanctions* annexed unto
them in the Civil Government, did all
Men regulate themselves by the *true Law*
of Nature and Principles of *right Reason*:
but since none can be so *sanguine*, as to
expect such a happy *state of things*, it
lies upon Good Men to do what they
can, and to use all those prudent Me-
thods which are in their *power*, to make
the *World* a little better; to unite their
Hands and their *Hearts*, in some mea-
sure, at least to *repress* notorious Vice and
punish Gods *Dishonour*. Its

It's almost incredible, to say, what happy Effects we should soon see from such a *close* and firm *Conjunction* of all good Men in the prosecution of these desirable Ends. Very considerable things have by Gods Blessing been already done by *some few* who have devoted themselves to the Service of God and their Country on this occasion; who have born the Burden and Heat of the day, and entred themselves into Societies for the Reformation of Manners, both in this and our neighbouring Nation of *Ireland*. And may God increase their Number: as he will certainly reward their *Labours*. There's a great Door opend, and no other can be expected but that they shou'd still meet with many Adversaries: There's yet but too much Employment for *more Hands*, and 'twou'd be the *Honour* as well as the *Interest* of all good Men, to joyn with them in this *Undertaking* (nay of the greatest Prince on Earth to own his Cause from whom he receives his Crown) that by *mature* and *united Councils*, mutual *assistance*, more earnest *application* and greater numbers, they might successfully prosecute what is

so

so well began, and what can scarcely be accomplished by any other *methods*.

III. I come now in the third place to the *manner* how we are to set about this great Duty. It ought certainly to be managed with the greatest *Zeal* and the greatest *Prudence*.

1. With *Zeal*. For since 'tis *good to be Zealously affected in every Good matter*, much more is it so in *this*, which has so immediate an *Influence* on so many great and momentous Ends. *Zeal* in *moral Affairs* seems to have much the same surprising *Effects* which *Motion* has in *Physical* and *Mechanical*; it produces what seem'd at first impossible, it gives a new *Mould* and *Turn* to every Action; it sets on work all the secret *Springs* and *Powers* of the Mind, and makes them act with such a *Force* and Vigour as is almost irresistible. God and Man hate a *lukewarm Temper*; which has often created greater Obstructions to good *Designs*, than the most open *Opposition* against them; *Who will rise up with me, who will stand up for me against the workers of Iniquity?* Who has *Courage*, and *Constancy*, and *Bravery* equal to so *glorious* an Undertaking? As that

that *Zeal* is *Madness*, which pushes a Man on to *illegal* and *indefensible* Actions, whatever be the *motive* of his engaging in them; so that *Wisdom* is *Folly*, which hinders a Man from doing his Duty, and vindicating Gods *Honour*.

But still we must take care that our *Zeal* be temper'd with *Prudence*; and if ever we are to be wise as *Serpents*, we are certainly to be so in those Matters, wherein we are sure to have the *old Serpent* himself our sworn and invetcrate Enemy: He may bruise the *Heel* of the *Seed of the Woman*, of the Members, as well as of Christ their Head, by *Backbiting* and *Reproaches*, and by all the Calumnies that Hell can invent, or its *Emissaries* utter. What need then have all those good Men who engaged in this *honourable* and *mighty Affair* of stemming the Tide of Vice amongst us, what need have they to be always upon their *Guard*, and to take *care* of their *Steps*, since there are so many who *lurch for their Halting*. To add by the most *prudent* and *advisable Methods*, to be *zealous* without being *passionate*, which perhaps is one of the most *difficult* things in the World. To

give no *just Offence* to any, to prepare themselves against the *doubtful Combat*; to expect to be *hated* and *slander'd* by *bad Men*, as was their Master before them, and for the same Reason too, because they *testifie against them that their deeds are evil*: to be *sober* and *vigilant*, to avoid what is *scandalous* as well as what is *sinful*, and so on the contrary. By no means to forget themselves, their own *Persons*, or their own *Families*, while they are so busie in reforming others; and to suffer no *Beam*, or so much as a *Mote* in their own Eye, while they are endeavouring to *clear their Brothers Eye*, which could not fail of having an *happy influence* on their own Minds, as their *instructive Examples* would on those of *others*; and be one of those *natural* and inseparable *Rewards* which even in this Life attend *Virtue* and *Goodness*, and which in some sort may seem to *antedate* an *happy Eternity*.

I proceed to draw some practical inferences from what has been said.

(*Use* 1.) And the first may be to *Reprove* those who are so far from opposing *Vice* and Wickedness, that they rather *encourage* it and support, as it well as *dis-*

courage

courage others who are engag'd against it; so far from *rising up against Evil-doers*, that they *rise up together* with them; and 'tis to be fear'd, that too many will come under this *Reproof* who think themselves wholly *innocent*, such are those who any ways *countenance* wicked Men in their *lewd Practices* and infamous Behaviours: who *chuse* the Company of *ill Men*, and therefore seem to *stand* in the way of *Sinners*, and are in great danger of *sitting in the seat of the scorner*—tho they cannot be ignorant who has said, *That he who walks with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroy'd*; not that all *Correspondence* with Ill Men is forbidden, as to the necessary *Offices* of *Civil* or *Private* Life; for then as the Apostle says, must we go *out of the World*; but I speak of a *voluntary Intimacy*, a peculiar unnecessary *Endearment* with bad Men, which if it does not make them better, will certainly make others worse, whose Conversation is so pestilentially infectious, than which the *Enemy* has scarcely a more dangerous Snare for the Souls of Men:

Unless, perhaps, some certain Societies in the Nation, of a quite different

sort from those already mention'd, and who, one would think, had for some years last past enter'd into a *sworn Conspiracy* against *Religion* and *Virtue*.

There scarce seems any need to explain my self, that hereby I mean our **infamous Theatres**, which seem to have done more Mischief, than *Hobes* himself or our new *Atheistical Clubs*, to the *Faith* and *Morals* of the *Nation*. Moral Representations are own'd to be in their own Nature, not only Innocent, but even useful as well as pleasant; but what is this to those which have no *Morals* or Morality at all in them, and which are the most *Immoral* things in the World; which the more any *good Man* is *acquainted* with them, the *less* he must still *like them*, and at which any *modest Heathen* would *blush* to be present. If we ever hope for an entire *Reformation* of *Manners*, even our *Jails* and our *Theatres* must have their shares. With as much reason may we exclaim against our *modern Plays* and Interludes, as did the old *zealous* Fathers against the *Pagan Spectales*, and as justly rank these as they did the others, among those *Pomps* and *Vanities* of this wicked World which our

Baptism

Baptism obliges us to *renounce* and to *abhor*. What *Communion* hath the *Temple* of *God* with *Idols*, with those abominable *mysteries of Iniquity* which outdo the old *Feasts* of the Heathens, the lewd *Orgies* of *Bacchus*, and the impious *Feasts* of *Isis* and *Priapus*? I know not how any Persons can *profitably*, or indeed *decently*, present themselves here before Gods *Holy Oracle*, who are *frequently* present at those *Schools* of *Vice*, and *Nurseries* of *Profaneness* and *Lewdness*, to unlearn *there* what they are *here* taught, out of *Gods Holy Word*. It recals to my mind a Passage not unlike it, in the Book of the *Kings*, (2 *Kings* xvii. 30, 33.) concerning those *Samaritans* who inhabited the Land of *Israel* after the *Captivity* of the Ten Tribes; 'tis said of them, That every Nation made *Gods* of their own; the Men of *Babylon* made *Succoth-Benoth*, that is, as Learned Men are of Opinion, the *Tabernacles* or *Temples*, or if you please, *Scenes* of *Theatres* of *Venus*; and others of them *burnt* their Children in the Fire to their *Idols*. —*so they feared the Lord and served their own Gods*. The Application is but too *obvious* and *easie*; would you suffer

your *Friend* or your *Child* to resort every day to a *Bawdy-house*, or a Place infected with any *contagious* and deadly *Disease*, whence you had seen many Persons carried out *dead* before you? If none would do this who pretended to be in his *right senses*, what *excuse* can be made for those who do *worse*, and are themselves frequently *present*, as well as suffer others to be so, at that place which is so nearly ally'd to *hers*, which *Solomon* describes: *whose House is the way to Hell, and her Gates lead down to the Chambers of Death.* And are they not too like those *Jews* *Ezekiel* mentions, who when they had *slain* their *Children* in the *Fire* to their *Idols*, came into Gods *Sanctuary* to profane it.

How can such Persons pray every day *Lead us not into Temptation*, when they themselves wilfully *rush* into the very *mouth* of it? 'Tis true the *Stage* pretends to *Reform Manners*, but let them tell us how many *Converts* they can name, by their means, to *Virtue* and *Religion* during these last thirty or forty years, and we can give *numerous* and sad *Instances* to the contrary, even of a brave and *virtuous* Nation too generally *depraved* and

corrupted

corrupted, to which there cannot perhaps be any one thing *assigned*, which has more highly contributed than these unsufferable and abominable *Representations*; the *Authors* of which, tho the Publick should continue to take notice of them, would either be forc'd so far to alter them that they would hardly be known, or else they would *fall* of themselves, if Men would but withdraw their *Company* from them, as their presence there does actually encourage and support them. To close the Head, whereon I'm sorry there's so much cause of insisting, since there are too many, of whom we may without *Breach* of *Charity* believe, that they'd rather forsake the *Church* than the *Theatre*, by their being so much more *frequently* and *delightfully* present at the *latter* than they are at the former.

If *Oaths*, if *Blasphemy*, if perpetual Profanation of the glorious Name of God and of our *Blessed Redeemer*, if making a *scoff* and a *laughter* at his Holy *Word* and *Institutions*, and I know not why I should not add his *Ministers* too, which is the very *Salt*, and almost the *Imprimatur* to *most* of the Comedies of the present

Age. If *Filthiness* and *foolish Talking* and profane or *immodest Jesting*, and insulting over the *miseries*, and *exciting*, and *representing*, and *recommending* the *Vices* of Mankind, either by not *punishing* them at all, or *slightly* punishing them, or even making them *prosperous* and *happy*; and teaching others first how to be *wicked*, and then to *defend* or hide their *Wickedness*, or at least to think *Virtue* ridiculous and *unfashionable*, and *Religion* and *Piety* fit for none but old People, *Fools* and *Lunaticks*; if *Contempt* of *Superiours*, if false Notions of *Honour*, if *Delight* of *Lewdness* and *Pride*, and *Revenge*, and even *Murder* be those *Lessons* which are daily taught at these *Publick Play-houses*, to the *disgrace* of our *Age*, *corruption* of our *Morals*, and *scandal* and *odium* of our *Nation*; for the truth of which we may appeal to all the *unprejudiced* and *virtuous* part of Mankind: Then we may further ask, whether these are fit Places for the *Education* of our *Youth*, the *Diversion* of those of *riper Age*, or indeed so much as *tolerable* as they now are, and without a great and unexpected *Reformation* under any Christian Government. If they are so,

they

they may then continue in their *present state*, and we may still *frequent* them; but in the mean time how can we presume to come hither unto *Gods House* and his *Holy Table*, unless we could answer that pathetick Expostulation of God to his own People, who liv'd not answerable to their Profession, 'What hast thou 'to do to tread my Courts, or take my '*Name* into thy *Lips*, seeing thou *hatest* 'to be *Reformed* and hast cast my Words 'behind thy back, and wert **Partaker** '**with the Adulterer.**

But to go on with the other Inferences; and the

II. Shall be to recommend that *Zeal* and that *Prudence* to your Practice, which is so highly necessary in those who set about the *Reforming* others.

And First for *Prudence*. Let every Man act in the *station* wherein God has plac'd him, and by those *Lawes* which are the *strength* of our happy Constitution, and with that *meekness*, *patience* and excellent *temper* of Mind, which our Saviour recommends to his Disciples, and then they cannot *err* in this matter. *Humility* is certainly a great part of *Prudence*

dence and a noble Christian *Virtue*, that hardly ever known or mentioned in the *Books* of the *Heathens*, and is highly necessary to those who are *engaged* in this *Work*. For 'tis not easie to be *singular* without a too great Opinion of our selves and being *embittered* and *soured* by the *Censures* of others, as well as by their refusal to *assist* us in what we know to be a *necessary* and an *honourable Undertaking*. &c. those must have a great *Command* in deed, of their own Minds, who never felt any *risings* in them on such *Provocations*. However this much is sure, that *Modesty* and *Meekness* did never yet hurt a good Cause, and are so far from that *meanness* and *dejection* of Mind which *betray* whatever they undertake; that after all, they are Arguments of the *clearest Courage* and *Magnanimity*. To close this Head, let us always remember, that we are not to *rise* up *tumultuously* even against *Evil-Doers*, but in an *orderly* and *legal* way. Those that strive *must strive lawfully*, in this, as well as in all other parts of our *Christian Warfare*, and *prudently* too, and therefore with *united Councils* and *Endeavours*.

Which

Which will be no *prejudice*, but rather an *advantage* to their *Zeal*, when it has so *stable* and so rational a Foundation.

And what further *Encouragement* can we desire, to set us about this necessary tho *invidious* Employment with the utmost *Zeal* and *Courage*, than those we already have? What *stronger Arguments* to perswade us to fix our selves as *Iron Pillars* and *Brazen Walls* against the *Workers of Iniquity*? To set our *united Breasts* against the Stream of *Profaneness* and *Wickedness*, which if we did, it must of necessity give way, since *Vice* cannot act upon any *settled Principles*, but is at the bottom cowardly and unstable. Is it *Honour* that we want to encourage us? Why we have a thousand on our side even in the *Breast* of every Ill man whom we bring to *just Punishment*. We have now, blessed be God, the glorious *Encouragement* of *Superiours*, that the *Sword* of *Justice* shall no longer lye *rusting* and *idle*, but be drawn and *furbished* up for the *Battle*, and *glitter* against the *Faces* of Gods and our Countrey's Enemies. We may hope for the concurrence of most *good Men* upon Earth, when they are satisfied

of

of the *sincerity* of our *Intentions* and t
Prudence of our Behaviour. Nay of
the *Heavenly Host* above, all the *H*
ngels of God; who if they rejoice
the *Conversion* of *one Sinner*, cannot
unconcern'd in any thing that looks
wards a more *publick* and *general Ref*
mation.

But alas! after all this, what reas
has every one who has any *real Conc*
for *God* and his *Country*, to cry out wi
the Father of old, *To what dregs of si*
ers we reserved! when Men may almo
print or *speak* what *Blasphemies* they ple
with *Impunity* and even with *Applau*
when too many of the Inordinate Mag
strates will not *act*, nor the People ge
rally *assist* them in the Punishment of
vil-Doers; when it shall be reckoned
part of *good Breeding*, or at least an
gument of *Wit* and *Spirit*, to ridicule
that's *sacred*, and to profane the *glori*
and *fearful Name*, *The Lord our God*,
yet the *rudest*, the *busiest*, and the m
clownish thing in the World, to *reprove*
to *detect* and *punish* such notorious Offen
ders, tho by the most *legal*, *prudent* an
advisable Methods. But there's still on

Comfor

Comfort to those who do so, and that is, that *God sees not as man sees*; that he is the *God of Judgment*, and by him *Actions are weighed*, not in the unequal *Scales* of *Prejudice* and *Partiality*, but by the unerring *Standard* of his own *Immutable Justice*.

And shall such a *wretched Mortal* as *We* are, of the same *Dust* and *Clay* with ourselves, and which must soon be reduc'd into the same *Dust* again: shall such a one presume to affront my *Father*, my *Patron*, my *Friend*, my *Benefactor*, my *Sovereign*, and I want *Courage* or *Honesty* to expose him, to detect him, and to bring him to that Shame and Punishment he so highly merits? Is this our kindness to our Friend, or should we ever believe any Person to be *ours* who so basely *deserted us*? Whom are we *afraid* of, that we *forget the Lord* our Maker? Let all the *Potsherds* of the Earth fall down together, and *humble* themselves before the *King*, the *Lord of Hosts*, and let him alone be *exalted*, whose *Glory* is above the *Heavens*, and who *shakes* the *Earth* at his *Displeasure*. The *Mountains* and the *Hills* shall flee away before him, and the *Thunder* of his *Power*, who can bear?

If

If we find our selves not yet *warm'd* or concern'd for any of these things, or at least *unfixed*, double-minded and wavering in our Duty; there's one Method still remaining, which will scarce fail to give a true and lasting *bent* to our Minds, and throughly engage us in this matter; and that is, the *entire Dedication* of our selves to God, without *exception* and without *reserve*; especially and more solemnly at the *Blessed Sacrament*, as often as the happy occasion is offer'd, and then let us see whether we shall *fear* the *World*, or whether that can ever *hurt* us? Then let us make *God's Glory* the principal *motive*, and *end* of all our *Actions*, actually *intend* it to it, and habitually *regard* it; let us *love God* with all our Hearts, and then we shall never endure to hear his *Holy Name* profan'd without a *just* and a *zealous* resentment.

Let us read often the *Lives of the Martyrs*, and see what they suffer'd, for his sake who *loved them, and washed them from their Sins in his own Blood*. (*Apoc.* 1. 5.) "They were *stoned*, were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the Sword, they endured *Trials* of cruel *mockings* and *scourgings*,

Scourgings, and Bonds and Imprisonments and the most infamous and painful Deaths, not accepting *Deliverance* that they might obtain a better Resurrection, a new and happier *State* of things in a better World. They endured all this, in *opposition* to *all the World*, for his sake whom they lov'd, and whom they knew, did then *see* them, and would unspeakably *reward* them. Here was the *Faith* and *Patience* of the Saints! Here were Christians indeed, and not an empty *Name* and outward *Profession* only! These *travelled* the World, subdued the Flesh and conquered the Devil, following the great Captain of their Salvation, as he himself led the way, with Crimson Banners and Garments roll'd in Blood; and shall we pretend to *follow them as they did him*, and pray for *Grace* to do so, and yet be afraid of a *few hard words* or frowns from Fellow-Creatures: be unwilling at the *expence* of a little *Reputation* amongst *mistaken* or *ill men*, to *retrieve* the *Honour* of God and of *Religion*, and *vindicate* the *Laws* and *Glory* of our Nation and of *common Christianity*,

Which is, in truth, the *proper* and *indispensable Office* of the *Magistrate*, and all others

thers must rise up against *Evil-Doers*, a *Assistants* with him and in *subordination* to him. If he therefore, like *Gallio*, care *for none of these things*; if he does not *rise up against the workers of Iniquity*, how can he answer his *criminal Neglect* before the Almighty *Judge* of all Men, with whom there is no *respect of Persons*. If the *subordinate Magistrate* refuses to discharge his own *Duty*; much more if he discourages those who attempt the Punishment of Offenders, he's at once guilty of *Perjury* and Injustice; he's neither loyal to God nor to his Prince, nor true to his Engagements, nor faithful to his Country. Blessed be God that there is now such great Encouragement from our Governours, for every honest Man to act with his utmost force in this Affair, and to make one *attack* more upon Vice, one further *effort* to recover the Honour of Virtue, the Happiness of our Nation; I mean the late Address of our Honourable Represenatatives in Parliament, which [and his Majesty's truly Royal Proclamation for the suppression of Vice, in pursuance thereof; concerning both of which, we may say thus much with *decency*,

cency in relation to what's past, that they are beyond the *Example of former Reigns*, and without *vanity* in reference of what's to come, that they] will *shine* in the *Annals* of our Country to all *Generations*. Now when Judgment thus emi[illegible] returns unto Righteousness, who is there that is upright in Heart but will gladly follow it? None will be refused who sincerely *offer* themselves even at the *Eleventh Hour*. Shall we then stand all the day *idle*, *when the Lord of the Vineyard calls us out to this painful* but glorious [illegible]. Is not the *punishment* of Evil-doers a thing highly *acceptable* to Almighty God, and were not *Magistrates* instituted by him, as for other *great Ends*, so to *execute Wrath* on those that do *Evil*; [illegible] have not those whose *proper business* it is to do so and yet neglect it, just reason to fear lest God should execute his Wrath against them, and that their *Lives* should go for the *Life of the Offender*? Or is there not still something very *bad* at the bottom of such a *general Negligence*, and if Men were really *virtuous* themselves, would they not heartily encourage *Virtue*, and discourage and punish *Vice* in

others, and even *root* out all *Evil-doers* from the *City of our God?*

And who those *Evil-doers* are, is easily resolved, and they are but too frequently met with; such as Blasphemers, Swearers, Profane and Atheistical Persons, the Unclean, and the *Adulterer*, with whom our Streets do in some parts of the City still too much abound, and any other open and *scandalous Sinner*. These the *Laws* of *God*, the Law of Nations, and the Laws of our Country have justly *branded*, as *infamous Persons* and *Evil-doers*. They were certainly esteem'd such in *former Ages*, and the Nature of *Vice* and *Virtue* is as unalterable and *eternal* as that of *Good* and *Evil*; and one would think they should not change with the *mode*, and that nothing should make the latter a *Disgrace*, the former a matter of *Glory*, or at least a subject of *Diversion* and Laughter only in any *civilized Nation*. But so it is, and is likely to be still worse if the Magistrate does not exert himself, and put the Laws in Execution against all such *Offenders*: and indeed if all People do not more *heartily* and unanimously join to *assist* the Magistrate in so doing; for

which

which there is no other effectual way but by giving **Information** against *Women* and *Scandalous Livers*.

Good Manners are the *Bond and Cement* of all *Societies*, and *good Laws* the life of *good Manners*; and unless these *Laws* are well *executed*, 'tis the same thing as if we were *without* them, if not yet worse, because the *contempt* of the Laws enhances the Guilt of the *Offender*, and Impunity renders him still more *obdurate*, and they can never be *executed*, unless **Information** be given against those who transgress them.

Magistrates, tho they are called *Gods*, because their *Power* is communicated unto them from the Almighty, yet are they not like him *every where* present. They *see* with the *Eyes* of other Men, and therefore if *private Persons* shut their own Eyes against *publick Enormities*, how is it possible for the *Magistrate* either to *detect* or to *punish* them? 'Tis the *Glory of Kings to search out a matter*, 'tis the *Glory* of all *Loyal Subjects* to *assist* them in it; to *Inform* against *profane* and *lewd Persons*, as freely as to give their *Testimony* concerning any other *Breaches* of the *Peace*, and

to bring those who *glory* in their *Shame* to just *Punishment*, that others may hear and Fear, and do no more *so wickedly*. Is not *misprision* of *Treason* against the *King of Heaven*, as notorious a *misdemeanour* as if it were against any *Earthly King*? What would the Law say to one who should *stifle* or conceal a *Felony* or a *Murder*, and would it not look upon him as an *Accomplice* in the *Fact*? What should we think our selves of a Neighbour who should *know* the Person that had *rob'd* us, and yet would not discover him? Do we think it any ways *infamous* to detect an *High-way-man*, or to *seize* him and bring him to *Justice*? and shall we be only unconcerned for the *Glory* of God, and our own and our Neighbours *Spiritual Welfare*?

To say the Truth, *Compassion* and *Charity*, as well as *Justice*, oblige us to act in this *Affair*, and will teach us to behave our selves both with *Concern* and with *Temper* in it. O *pity*, *pity* poor Sinners, and pray to God to *pity* them, who want the *Sence* and *Grace* to *pity* themselves; but shew your *pity* to them, not by a *cruel Fondness*, but by a kind and *whole-*

some Severity. Would you suffer your *dearest Friend* to dye for want of *Cutting* or *Bleeding* him, when you saw him labouring under the *extremest Agonies?* Alas these are all our Friends, for a *Christian has no enemies:* we are all *Brethren* in the Profession of *Christianity;* we have all one common Lord, should have *one Faith,* as we have one *Baptism,* one *God* and *Father* of us all, tho too many are ignorant of him, or *rebellious* against him. Why should we suffer such as these to tumble over a *fatal Precipice* for fear of disturbing or *disobliging* them, by pulling them back with some *haste* and *violence?* Why should our *poor Brother perish for whom Christ dyed?* I'm mistaken if here be not oftentimes the main *point* and *stress* of this Affair. As one great *end* of punishing an *Offender* is for the *Example* of others, so another end is to make him *better,* where he is not *notoriously incorrigible:* now if you can but once convince him that you *love* him, and that even your *punishing* of him is an effect of it, you are in a fair way to *work* upon him: and you have ground to *hope* that you shall *save a Soul and cover a multitude of Sins.*

As for that part of the *Application* which relates to that *Union* which ought to be among good Men against the *Workers of Iniquity*, I shall turn it chiefly to those who are already concern'd in any *Societies* for the *Reformation of Manners*, or in the Religious Societies. You expect not, my Brethren, any *Flattering Titles*, nor dare I give any, lest my *Maker* should *take me away*. But Truth must be *spoken*, and all due *Encouragement* ought to be given to such *glorious Undertakings*. You are engag'd in the best of *Works*, the preventing *Gods Dishonour*; the promoting his *Glory* and your Countrey's *Happiness*: you have not rested satisfied with a *monastick* Piety or *Virtue*, with being *Good your selves* and then letting the *World run* which way it pleas'd; but have endeavour'd to *better* others as well as your *selves*. Go on in the *Name of God* to fight the *good Fight* and finish your Course, for you know what is laid up for you; let not go your *Hope* and *Confidence* in your great *Lord* and Master! Believe, be assur'd, that if you act *sincerely* and *regularly* in this Affair, he will *accept* and *reward* you. Never look back

now

now you have once put your *Hand to the Plough*. Since you are so well assur'd the *Work is of God*, and it *does* and *will* prosper, tho how *much* and how *long*, must be left to him who is the *wise disposer of all things*. Who can tell what *Mercies*, what undeserved *Mercies* God may yet have in store for a most Sinful, Ungrateful *Nation*, *For he has mercy on whom he will have mercy*. This we are sure, that none shall miss of his *Favour*, who perform those *Conditions* on which it is offer'd.

In the mean time, *suffer* a little, my Brethren! the *Word of Exhortation*; remember the Eyes of *God*, *Men* and *Angels* are upon you; be *sober*, be *vigilant*, and forget not who is your Adversary frequently; remember what *spirit* you ought to be of, that of the Gospel of Christ, of the *meek* and *lowly Followers* of Jesus. Avoid, as a *pest*, the saying to your Brother, like the proud *Hypocrites* of old, *Depart from me I am Holier than thou*: *Forbid* none from *casting out Devils* because he follows not with you. Have a care of calling for *Fire* from Heaven upon those who do not *receive* you; a weakness whereof two of Christs best Disci-

ples were guilty. Be *careful* and *watchful* and *humble*, and all *Earth* and *Hell* can never hurt you. *Praise* the Lord of Life and Glory, if he has *touch't* your Minds with a true *sense* of your *Sins*, and given you *rational grounds* to believe they are pardoned, for the sake of his dear Son our Lord, on your hearty and habitual *Repentance*. Endeavour more and more to *pull* others out of the *Fire*. Think not a *private Admonition* is sufficient in the case of *open* and *scandalous Offences*, any more than it would excuse you in the *concealment* of a *Traytor*, or any other notorious *Offender*. Be willing, be thankful to be accounted the *Filth* and *Off-scouring* of the World; the *Disturbers* of the *publick Peace* (by those who themselves notoriously break it) and such as *turn the World upside down*, as you know who were called before ye. Think much of *Heaven*. Forget not *Death*. Be *constant* at *Sacraments*, in Prayer Publick, Domestick and *Private*, never neglecting the *latter*, never when you can with any convenience be present at it, the *former*. Neglect not to *Sing the High Praises of God*. Remember the *Poor*, especially Gods

Poor.

Poor. Pity the *Afflicted*, especially our dear Brethren who now *suffer for the Word of God and the Testimony of Jesus*. Bless God *fervently*, tho you can never do it *sufficiently*, for that *Peace* and *Liberty* which our Nation now enjoys, and for the publick Discouragement of open and publick Wickedness, and be ready to make more *vigorous Attacks* than ever against it, now there's so great Encouragement for it, and so fair an opportunity is offered. *Follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes*, who came into the World for this very purpose, that he might destroy the *Works* of the *Devil*, conquer the *Kingdom* of Satan, and *establish* the *Kingdom* of God in the *Hearts* of Men; which consists not in *Meats* and *Drinks*, in little *distinctions* and *particularities*, but in *Righteousness*, and *Peace*, and *Joy* in the Holy Ghost. Follow him in *meekness*, *patience* and *humility*; bearing the *Cross* as he himself did before us, who when 'he was *revil'd*, *revil'd* not again, 'when he suffer'd threatned not, but com-'mitted himself to him that *judgeth Right-'eously*, and for the *Joy* that was set before 'him endured the Cross, despis'd the 'Shame, and is now sat down at the Right 'Hand of the Majesty on High. To

To conclude all. Let every *serious Christian*, who has that Integrity and *Uprightness* of Heart which the Psalmist here mentions, now consider more earnestly than ever, how eminently such *Designs* as these would tend to the *exercising*, and consequently the *improving* and *increasing* of many Graces or *Holy Habits*, of his *Prudence*, and *Patience*, and *Courage*, and *Zeal*, and *Meekness*, and *contempt* of the World, and *Integrity*, and *Humility*; and yet further, what great *Rewards* will he receive for his Faithfulness to God, even in this World: supposing the worst, that he should suffer in his Estate or Good Name by the Discharge of his Duty; O the *Peace*, the *Joy*, the *Triumph*, the *exultation of mind* which a *good Man* possesses, when he reflects on any *Sufferings* he undergoes for the sake of God, and for the Cause of despised *Religion* and *Virtue*. How *light* are these *Afflictions* unto him, which others would be ready to *sink under*, and how *little* does he think they *deserve that Name*, when they *work* out for him *such an exceeding and eternal weight of Glory!* He *believes*, he *knows* this from *certain* and *infallible* Causes; he *knows* in whom

whom he has *believed*: he bids the *World* do its *worſt*, he has a *Reſerve* beyond it; his *Treaſure* is not in it; he *aſpires* to that *better World*, where he *knows* who will *meet* him when this *painful Life* is ended, *receive* him into everlaſting *Habitations*, and ſay unto him, *Well done good and faithful Servant, enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord.*

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